

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### **Listing Of Claims:**

1.-10. (Canceled)

11. (New) A method for monitoring a performance reliability of at least one of a control unit and at least one sensor of a safety device for protecting a vehicle occupant, comprising the steps:

- a) recording a value corresponding to at least one of a negative acceleration, a velocity, and a pressure, caused by an impact;
- b) deriving a value for an impact severity from the recorded value;
- c) comparing a value for the impact severity to a predefined threshold value; and
- d) outputting an error-function signal in the event that the value for the impact severity exceeds the predefined threshold value, the error-function signal indicating that a proper functioning can no longer be ensured for the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor.

12. (New) The method as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

calculating the value for the impact severity for each of the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor; and

comparing each calculated value to a respective predefined threshold value for each of the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor.

13. (New) The method as recited in Claim 11, wherein information from a plurality of impact processes is taken into consideration in determining one of the value for the impact severity of the control unit and the predefined threshold value associated with the value for the impact severity.

14. (New) The method as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

lowering the predefined threshold value with an increasing operating time of the safety device.

15. (New) The method as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

determining the predefined threshold value from at least one of a crash test and one of calculations and findings derived therefrom.

16. (New) The method as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

implementing a read-out and an analysis of an output error-function signal by at least one of the control unit and a service facility testing device.

17. (New) A diagnostic device for monitoring a performance reliability of at least one of a control unit and at least one sensor of a safety device for protecting a vehicle occupant, comprising:

an arrangement for coupling to the at least one sensor of the safety device to record an impact, the diagnostic device being arranged in a motor vehicle together with the control unit and the at least one sensor;

a comparator that provides at least one predefined threshold value for a proper functioning of the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor, the comparator comparing a value for an impact severity derived from the impact to the predefined threshold value; and

an output device that outputs an error-function signal in the event that the value for the impact severity exceeds the at least one predefined threshold value, the error-function signal indicating that a future proper functioning is no longer ensured for the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor.

18. (New) The diagnostic device as recited in Claim 17, wherein a functionality of the diagnostic device is implemented in the control unit, either entirely or partially.

19. (New) The diagnostic device as recited in Claim 17, wherein, for each one of the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor, a respective threshold value is predefined that is typical for one of the control unit and the at least one sensor.

20. (New) The diagnostic device as recited in Claim 17, wherein the predefined threshold value is lower than a threshold value provided for a triggering of a restraining arrangement assigned to the at least one of the control unit and the at least one sensor.